

Since its formation in 2011 **Midsomer Norton Town Council**, its eleven Councillors and Officers has been working hard to deliver an increasing range of projects and services to take the town forward.

Focusing on its strategic objectives overleaf, the Council serves a population of more than 12,000 people living in over 4,500 households. The Precept is a small proportion of the overall Council Tax on every residential property in the area and forms the Council's income for the year. The Council also receives some modest income for facilities it provides such as allotments.

A Community Survey was completed in late 2013 to inform future priorities and over 25% of the electorate responded. The results provided key evidence for the draft objectives for a Neighbourhood Development Plan on which the Town Council has begun to consult a range of stakeholders.

2015/2016 Income - Precept

In setting its budget for 2015-2016, the Council has very carefully considered the costs of its services and responsibilities and also looked at the key projects it is planning to focus on. Despite economic recovery beginning to manifest itself, Council Tax payers continue to face many financial challenges. As a result, the Council has decided to keep the amount paid by each household the same for 2015/16. For a Band D tax payer, the town council element will remain at £86.16 resulting in an overall increase in tax income of £9,587 to £350,202 and a total budgeted income of £352,052.

Community Development

The Council's vision is of an inclusive community where individuals will respect each other and contribute to the well-being of the whole town.

The Council has a number of schemes in place:

- Midsomer Norton Life, our community newsletter, is now in its 14th issue which will focus on an action plan from the recent survey.

- The creation of the Midsomer Norton Community Trust to carry out three main roles – managing community buildings and spaces on a day to day basis, organising community events and encouraging and supporting community groups.
- Acquiring a long lease on the Church of the Holy Ghost Garden to provide a peaceful haven in the town for residents and visitors to enjoy.
- Running a grants scheme which continues to distribute funds to potentially over 80 community organisations.
- Continuing to involve younger people in the town with a dedicated and meaningful Youth budget.
- The creation of the Midsomer Norton Town Trust to will hold land and buildings on behalf of the Council. The Town Trust is also developing plans to refurbish the Town Hall to enable it to play an even more key role at the heart of the community. The Trust intends to submit a planning application thanks to support from the Homes and Communities Agency. Securing community buildings as long term assets for the town (such as the Town Hall and Orchard Hall) under the Town Trust will enable it to manage these assets for the benefit of the community.

Civic Pride

In order to ensure that Midsomer Norton is a town we can feel proud of, the Council continues to:

- Operate Ground Operations Contracts for horticultural planting, grass cutting and town warden services which have contributed significantly to improving the look of the town.
- Implement a range of initiatives to promote the night time economy of the town including providing Street Marshals on Friday and Saturday nights, a Designated Public Place Order to control street drinking, complemented by the Community Alcohol Partnership scheme. Crime statistics continue to show an improvement in the safety of the town centre. The Council continues to seek to work with a range of stakeholders to ensure that we listen to their concerns and build relationships.
- Influence regeneration in the town through the Economic Development Partnership to focus on

generating new employment opportunities and increased footfall as part of the town regeneration plan to unlock the town's potential.

- Turn 40 year old proposals in to a reality of a Town Park to address the shortage of green space in the town including developing a concept model and negotiating with landowners. The Town Council successfully applied for change of use and plans to acquire the land it are well advanced.

The Town Council also administers or funds the following services and facilities from its office at Midsomer Norton Town Hall:

- The recreation ground at West Clewes (North Road)
- The War Memorial in the High Street
- Public conveniences at the Town Hall
- Bus shelters
- Public seats
- Litter and dog waste bins
- Allotments at Radstock Road which are managed by an Allotment's Association.

Being a well-run Council

Council Meetings

Meetings of the Council are normally held on the first Monday of the month and Planning Committee meetings are on the second or third Monday. Meetings are held in the Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, starting at 7.00pm.

Public notice of meetings is given on the Council's notice board and a schedule of the main meetings can also be obtained from the Town Council's Offices or the Town Council's web site.

All Council and Planning Meetings are open to the public and press, however they may be temporarily excluded to allow discussion of establishment, property and finance matters because of their confidential nature. There is a public session prior to the meeting when questions can be asked of the Council by members of the public although they may not take part in the meeting. The agenda and related reports for meetings of the Town Council and its Committees can be viewed in full at the Town Council's Offices and on the Council's website.

Each year the Town Council hosts a Town Meeting which the community is encouraged to attend and inform Councillors of their concerns and requests. The next Town Meeting will be held on Monday 20th April 2015 in the Town Hall Midsomer Norton, commencing at 7.00pm.

Planning

We are consulted on all planning applications, local and strategic plans by Bath & North East Somerset Council. In addition the Town Council is consulted on proposals affecting the Midsomer Norton area by bodies such as Bath & North East Somerset Council, health service organisations and Government Departments.

Planning applications are considered by the Planning Committee. Councillors contributed to the development of Bath and North East Somerset Council's neighbourhood planning protocol.

Income & Expenditure

The Town Council is required to give details to the local community of its proposed annual income and expenditure. The table on the next page shows the budgeted income and expenditure for 2015/2016.

In summary, the proposed budget covers all planned expenditure and for £1,000 to be used to increase reserves earmarked for key future capital work including the Town Park. The level of the Council's general reserve will be kept at around three months' expenditure (as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils) and there will be no increase in the Town Council element of Council Tax paid by tax payers in the town.

If you have any questions on the precept please contact the Town Clerk on 01761 418701, by e-mail to townclerk@midsomernortontowncouncil.co.uk or by post to The Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, Radstock BA3 2HQ.

REF: MSNTC/PRECEPT/2015/16/A

Budget 2015/2016

Expenditure	
Central Services - Council Office, Staff and Equipment, Professional Fees	£115,650
Democratic Process - Newsletter, Website, Training, etc	£21,510
Parks and Play Areas - Equipment Maintenance	£4,250
Allotments - Water and grounds maintenance	£2,050
Ground Services - maintaining the town environment	£33,250
Memorials - Maintenance	£1,100
Street Marshals	£20,250
Community Support - grants	£23,000
Community Events	£39,500
Youth and Children activities	£7,500
Community and Neighbourhood Plans	£25,000
Town Park Development Costs	£7,500
Capital Projects and Loans	£50,492
<i>To capital reserve</i>	<i>£1,000</i>
Total Budget Expenditure	£352,052
Income	
Precept Received	£318,172
Local Council Tax Support Grant	£32,030
Interest Received	£1,000
Allotments Rent Receivable	£850
Total Budget Income	£352,052



Midsomer Norton Town Council

2015/16 Precept Explained

The Council's Strategic Objectives

- To develop a strong sense of community
- To encourage civic pride in our town
- To be a well-run council that delivers results